

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES

Date: July 17, 2014

Meeting No.: 188

Project: PEMCO Planned Unit Development

Phase: Schematic

Location: 5601 Eastern Avenue

PRESENTATION:

Mr. David Frederick, Principle of MCB Real Estate LLC and Mr. Robert Northfield, architect with BCT Architects presented 2 preliminary schematic site designs to the panel.

The 20 acre property is a brownfield site with the partially demolished PEMCO Industrial manufacturing plant fronting on Eastern Avenue to the north and I-95 frontage to the south. A significant portion of the site has been previously “capped” to control existing environmental hazards and is being monitored. The focus of the presentation and panel discussion was a fundamental urban design site plan to organize and urbanize the site for future development.

The stated purpose of the two (2) urban design schemes presented was to extend a pedestrian friendly “urban grid” into the site, reinforced with Gateway buildings on Eastern Avenue and create a mixed use neighborhood center with residential and commercial, defined as potentially both office and retail. Specific aspects of the 2 proposals are:

- Both schemes proposed a main boulevard in the center of the property from Eastern Avenue in a North-South direction. The Anchor Scheme emphasized retail uses while the Option 2 scheme emphasizes residential combined with first floor retail.
- Both schemes reflect the significant uncertainty of market conditions in the surrounding neighborhood. Johns Hopkins Bayview is a neighboring property and may contribute to demand for residential, hotel and retail but market conditions are fluid.
- The key issue at the current review is to establish an urban design plan that can positively contribute to the future viability of the site.

COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL:

Overall the panel found the two design schemes lacking in fundamental elements of an urban design approach that could be a powerful activator of the space and contribute to a compelling urban design site plan. The panel recommends the following:

The guiding principles for the development plan include:

- Establish a continuous "street wall" of buildings along the main street.
- All ground levels uses along both sides of the main street should be active uses: retail, residential and or office entrance lobbies. Allow no structured parking to front onto main street.
- Provide a strong building edge along Eastern Avenue with active retail. Discourage blank facades and or "black box" retail and surface parking lots.
- Sidewalks along the main street should be wide enough to encourage/accommodate outdoor dining/ activity and appropriate landscaping.
- There needs to be a regular cadence of street trees along the main street as well as secondary streets created within the site.

- Develop connections to the broader community along Eastern Ave. and into Greektown.
- Consider creating a ‘residential’ district on the east portion of the site stretching from Eastern Ave. south and a business and retail district on the western portion of the site in order to provide inherent flexibility to the plan; rather than siting retail uses in convenient locations which limit future development towards a vision.

PANEL ACTION:

A revised Urban Design Concept Plan needs to be submitted which follows fundamental urban design principles and establishes the main street as a key design component. The Panel recommends additional master plan development and review.

Attending:

David Frederick, Scott Frederick - MCB Real Estate LLC
Robert Northfield, Tyler Thurston - Brown Craig Turner (BCT) Architects
Al Barry – AB Associates
Tony Cortea – STV
Kevin Litten - BBJ

Ms. Meany*, Messr. Bowden, Burns and Haresign - UDARP Panel

Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Carmen Morosan, Jill Lemke, Tamara Woods – Planning Department